



ASAP Certification Examination Preparation Guide

CA-AM – Certification of Achievement-Alliance Management
CSAP – Certified Strategic Alliance Professional

May 24, 2011

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Why get certified?

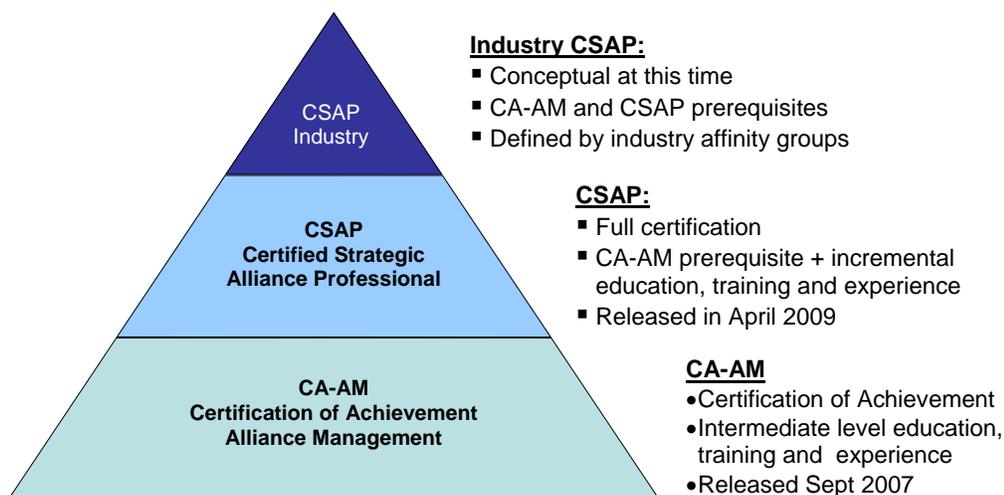
Alliance management is evolving as a recognized management discipline with a unique set of skills and competencies required to be adept at successfully managing organizational collaboration. A clear understanding of what those skills are and how to assess them are becoming more important to companies as they depend upon strategic alliances to drive corporate growth and to in-source innovation. The Association of Strategic Alliance Professionals (ASAP) has begun the work of codifying those competencies and documenting them. To enable companies to better assess the skill levels of alliance managers, ASAP has developed a certification and credentialing program built on the competency model which validates the skills of certified alliance professionals.

How can I prepare?

[Phoenix Consulting Group](#) assumed a leading role in the process of creating the certification program for ASAP and has created a suite of tools, study aids, practice drills and questions and a preparation workshop to help alliance professionals to hone their skills and test their readiness to take the exam for credentialing. This Preparation Guide will answer many of the questions you may have about what to expect from the credentialing experience and to best prepare for the exam.

What is the Certification of Achievement?

The Certification of Achievement – Alliance Management (CA-AM) is the first of three levels of certification planned for deployment by the Association of Strategic Alliance Professionals. The CA-AM is oriented to the intermediate level alliance manager with 3-5 years experience in managing collaborative business relationships. A professional at this level would have a sound understanding of all the basic alliance management concepts and would have mastered the skills needed to manage an ongoing alliance. To qualify for certification, a candidate must be a member of the Association of Strategic Alliance Professionals, attest that they have at least 3 years of relevant experience in managing collaborative relationships, agree to abide by the ASAP Professional Code of Conduct, and complete the CA-AM exam with a passing score.



What is CSAP?

The Certified Strategic Alliance Professional (CSAP) is the next level of competency. The alliance manager at this skill level would have at least five years experience and the skills to manage the full alliance lifecycle plus an understanding of the more advanced alliance functions such as managing a portfolio or network of alliances that would be the domain of an alliance executive.

It is ASAP's intent to introduce a specialized certification that addresses the needs of specific industries. For example, in the life sciences industry, many alliances focus on drug discovery and development with a unique set of considerations related to that mission. In the technology sector, many alliances focus on creating competitive differentiation to drive market share gains and revenues. The Industry CSAP (ICSAP) will certify competency in the unique areas related to managing successful alliances in a particular industry.

What does Certification Test for?

The Certification exams were developed from a compilation of alliance management capabilities and competencies. The full range of alliance management competencies have been documented by ASAP in the Professional Development Guide which includes:

Core Competencies: These competencies are unique and specific to alliance management such as alliance governance and organizational alignment. It is a subset of these competencies which are addressed in the CA-AM exam, specifically the skills required to manage an operational alliance vs the full lifecycle. The CSAP exam tests for the full range of core competencies.

Contextual Competencies: These competencies are important to performing the alliance management function but are not specific to alliance management. These include skills such as project management, leadership, communications skills, and financial management.

Company Competencies: These competencies are specific and unique to each company such as understanding the market, products, competition, the organizational structure and strategic imperatives of a specific company.

Context	Core	Company
Business skills required in alliance management but not unique to the role	Critical competencies specific to the role of alliance management	Knowledge elements unique to the company and competitive environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications Skills • Conflict Resolution • Financial Management • Change Management • Project Management • Team Management • Negotiation Skills • Leadership by Influence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating Strategic Alignment • Value Proposition Dev • Governance • Alliance Metrics Setting • Operating Principles • Joint Business Planning • Relationship Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding company strategic imperatives • Industry and technical drivers • Organizational and functional structure • Company governance • Company partnering culture

While all these skills and competencies are necessary to perform the job of alliance management, the Alliance Professional Certification specifically tests for alliance core competencies. The specific tasks tested for the CA-AM level of certification are specified in: CA-AM Examination Detailed Content Outline. Similarly a broader set of skills and competencies are specified for CSAP in the CSAP Examination Detailed Content Outline.

What are the exams like?

The CA-AM exam is comprised of 85 multiple-choice questions and takes approximately 70 minutes to complete. The test is delivered on-line, through a web interface. Registrants are sent a unique identifier and password to take the test. You do not have to complete the test in one session. You may log-off and log back in to complete the exam, however you must complete the exam within 30 days of receiving a test ID.

The CSAP exam is comprised of 150 multiple-choice questions and takes approximately 2-1/2 hours to complete. The CSAP exam is a proctored exam, administered at secure test centers in major cities across the US, Europe, North Africa and Asia. You register on line to schedule for a test date.

The Detailed Content Outline or test specification for each exam specifies how many questions are allocated across the various competency areas and to what cognitive level or level of understanding the questions are directed.

In summary:

Recall cognitive level: Remember a fact or attribute

Application cognitive level: Apply a principle, identify an issue

Analysis cognitive level: Solve a problem, select an appropriate course of action

Questions are typically very situational and task oriented, i.e., they will draw more on experience and judgment than on theory or memory.

You must select the “best” answer out of three multiple choice options. Again, because the questions are situational, any one of the options may fit a certain situation, but only one answer is considered ‘best’ for the situation described.

There are no throw away options. Options are written so that a less experienced alliance manager may select the inappropriate option. Many common mistakes that an inexperienced alliance manager, or for that matter, some senior executives might make are included.

How were the exams developed?

The exams were developed by the Association of Strategic Alliance Professionals (ASAP) with the assistance of Applied Measurement Professionals (AMP), a company that specializes in creating certification exams that test for skills and competencies. Over sixty ASAP volunteers participated in the process of developing the competencies, the test specification, writing the exam questions and selecting and refining the questions that ultimately appear in the certification exam and taking the exam as alpha and beta testers. Volunteers representing Europe, Asia, and the United States, academia, business practitioners, and consultants across multiple industries and alliance types were included in the process to ensure that the exam would be relevant to the broadest cross section of alliance management professionals.

The process relied heavily on the concept of the “consensus of experts” to ensure that the best questions and the best answers were selected for the exams.

How can I prepare for certification?

There are several tools available for test preparation. There are several references for alliance management such as the ASAP Strategic Alliances Best Process Workbook ©2002 and the ASAP Strategic Alliance Best Practice Guidebook ©1999 which are available for sale on the website: www.strategic-alliances.org. Additional references are available in the ASAP member's library, including white papers, articles and presentations from alliance researchers, consultants, and practitioners.

[Phoenix Consulting Group](http://www.phoenixcg.com) also provides several supplemental tools that will aid in test preparation:

- 1) Compendium of resources that lists supplemental reference materials
- 2) Alliance management glossary of terms
- 3) Best practices and competencies self-assessment tool
- 4) Sample test questions
- 5) Experiential Skills Mastery Workshop for exam prep

The Skills Mastery Workshops are limited to 12 participants who have experience in managing collaborative relationships. The workshop format is experiential in nature based on scenarios and case study discussions versus a purely lecture format. It is intended to draw heavily upon the experiences and expertise of the participants to discuss options, approaches, and alternatives for real world situations.

An exam prep tool kit is provided to all workshop attendees. The compendium, glossary and the self-assessment are provided as pre-work. For more information visit our certification center:

<http://www.phoenixcg.com/services/certification.html>

Other resources for preparation available from Phoenix Consulting Group include the following white papers and articles available on the Resources page of our website:

PhoenixCG Publications

Available on www.phoenixcg.com/resources/resources.html

Partner Health Diagnostic - August 2007

Partner health diagnostics are a proven best practice, lending insight into how well an alliance is functioning in many dimensions. The ultimate goal of a diagnostic is to improve alliance relationships and performance by acting on objective feedback. The diagnostic enables the alliance leader to:

- Understand critical success factors for alliance performance from the perspective of the both alliance teams – a bilateral view.
- Gain insight and perceptions of key alliance stakeholders regarding the health and value of Company's most important relationships.
- Address relationship issues before they impact performance.
- Strengthen alliance teams through collaborative problem solving that will result in far-reaching benefits in alliance performance.
- Identify opportunities to leverage into competitive advantage

Effective Executive Sponsorship- April 2007

Executive sponsorship is commonly acknowledged as one of the most critical factors for alliance success. This applies not only to individual alliances but also relates to how well an organization can realize value from all their partner relationships i.e., how well does a company partner. A successful alliance program begins at the top with the support of the CEO. Like many other things, the CEO influences company culture, models the behavior, and sets

the priorities in collaborative relationships. CEO support and that of the CXO staff fosters the environment where alliances can thrive and deliver results.

Optimizing Partner Investments February 2006

Partner Surveys are one tool that can aid Partner Management in understanding how to optimize the investment in their partner programs and in specific strategic alliances. Partner surveys can reveal much about the health and viability of your partner ecosystem and reveal strengths and weaknesses of your most strategic relationships.

Building Win-Win-Win Value Propositions: The Key to Sustainable Partnerships June 2005

How often do partner managers or our management focus only on “*What do we get out of the deal?*” While it is important as good business managers that we do understand the return on investment on our partnerships and alliances, it is also important to understand that viable, sustainable partnerships are based on a more complex value proposition. A winning value proposition isn’t just a two way proposition. It is a three way proposition. One that includes not only what your partner gets out of the deal, but also what your joint customer gets out of the deal. Successful got-to-market alliances start with a compelling JOINT value proposition that addresses the customer buying motivations first.

Phoenix Consulting Group

What we do - PhoenixCG specializes in best practice partner strategies, programs, training and marketing for companies who have the vision to transform their partnering practices to drive corporate growth and build shareholder value.

Who we are - PhoenixCG brings together seasoned, consulting principals with practical expertise and a commitment to building high performance channels and alliances.

Why we are different - Phoenix CG stays on the forefront of partnering best practices through our alliances and affiliations, such as the Association of Strategic Alliance Professionals and as a partner of IDC Software Business Strategies.

Why prepare for certification through PhoenixCG? – PhoenixCG has been instrumental in the development of the certification program. As the lead on the ASAP Standards Board, Norma Watenpaugh, Founder of Phoenix Consulting Group, has been involved in every phase of developing the certification program, from defining the professional competency model, developing the exam questions and validating the best answers. As Chair of the Best Practices Board, she is on the forefront of new alliance management tools, techniques, and processes which have proven to contribute to alliance performance and success. The preparation program has been designed to aid the alliance professional to leverage experience and sharpen the critical decision making skills in the area of alliance management.